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ILLINOIS

walnut point

STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA

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CONSERVATION

THE AREA

Walnut Point State Fish and Wildlife Area became a reality in 1961 when the Illinois General Assembly approved legislation which authorized its establishment and provided funds for its development. The 571 acre area, in eastern Illinois, is in Douglas County 20 miles northeast of Charleston between Routes 36 and 133.

The initial land acquisition was 464 acres in 1961, but the area didn't officially open until 1968. Originally known as Douglas County Conservation Area, Walnut Point offers many recreational facilities along with having the attributes of a Conservation Area.

HISTORY

This area was considered prime land in the 1800's by two of the early settlers, Snowden Sargent, for whom the local township was named, and Andrew Gwinn. Both men were cattle farmers and were influential in developing the area. They also were related by marriage, which meant that these two men had control of most of the area.

The name Walnut Point comes from the history of Douglas County and Sargent Township where the park is located. The first settlement in the 1830's, known as Walnut Point, was located within 3 miles of the park.

THE NATURAL SCENE

The area has two scenic, tree-lined drives. These drives show the visitor the native trees of Illinois; ash, oak, hickory, walnut, locust and sassafras. The drives are especially beautiful in the spring when the redbuds and wildflowers bloom.

This area includes many mammals such as deer, grey and fox squirrels, rabbits and raccoons. Turtles, snakes and other reptiles can also be found in the park.

Bird watchers will find good viewing here as many different species visit the area. Some of the birds of the area include Scarlet Tanagers, Cedar Waxwings, Orioles and Rose-Breasted Grosbeaks. The wood duck has also been seen nesting in the trees.

THE LAKE

Walnut Point Lake, a watershed impoundment of 59 acres, is the focal point of the area. The many-fingered lake is stream fed and formed by an earthen dam which is located on the south side of the area. The dam was built in 1967 and water filled the basin to spillway level by the fall of 1968. The lake has a maximum depth of 32 feet, an average depth of 12 feet and a shoreline of 6.3 miles.

In the late 1960's the lake was stocked with largemouth bass, black crappie, brown and channel catfish, redear, sunfish and bluegill. In order to assure desirable fishing populations, fish management practices such as the control of submerged vegetation and water drawdowns are used to reduce the number of small panfish.

FACILITIES

Picnicking: Tables and outdoor stoves are in wooded picnic areas bordering the lake. Firewood is not provided. Several parking areas are near the picnic areas and boat launches.

Hiking: There are two trails weaving in and out of the timber with a total of 2¼ miles for hiking and nature study.

Fishing: The angler has the opportunity to catch a variety of fish, including largemouth bass, black crappie, channel and brown catfish, bluegill and redear sunfish. With its many finger-like coves, the lake provides the setting for good fishing. In addition, a quarter mile walk south of the dam will bring the fisherman to the Embarras River where he may try his luck at river fishing. Two (2) single-lane boat ramps and numerous floating docks are provided for lake access. (Electric motors only)

Camping: There is a Class B family camping area with tables, electricity and a sanitary station for trailers. Class C, Class D (walk-in tent camping), and Class E (youth group) camping areas are also available. Campers are required to have their camping unit and equipment with them when they register. Remember, only one (1) camp unit per site.

Winter Sports: Ice fishing and ice skating are permitted on the lake. (At your own risk). Ample area is also available for cross-country skiing.

Hunting: Limited squirrel hunting is permitted. Please check at the area office for details.

Concession: A concession is operated from April thru September for visitor convenience. A few of the services and items provided include camping supplies, boat rental, bait, food services, and firewood.

Handicapped Access: Handicapped facilities are available for use at Hickory Grove Picnic Area. These facilities include fishing pier, small picnic shelter, parking, and restroom.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Groups of 25 or more persons will not be admitted to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the site manager has been granted to use the facilities. In addition, groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous recreation areas and historic sites are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state conservation areas are open the year round, except on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of the facility roads during freezing and thawing periods, access is by foot only.

For more details about this area, contact Site Manager, R.R. #2, Box 250, Oakland Illinois 61943, phone 217/346-3336. For more information on other sites, write Illinois Department of Conservation, 524 S. Second, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

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3 0112 122556282

To Champaign

To Urbana

130

Villa Grove

57

Newman

36

Walnut Point State Fish and Wildlife Area

133

Oakland

Charleston

57

130

To Paris

16

Ashmore

To Mattoon

N

Area Entrance

To US 36 6 Mi.

Shelter

Parking

Superintendent's Residence

Area Office

Twin Points Picnic Area

Cardinal Drive

Deer Run Boat Launch

Gray Squirrel Campground

Youth Group Camping

Tent Camping

Shady Bay Boat Launch

Parking

Camping

Parking

Woodpecker Drive

Lakeside Nature Trail

Parking

Fox Squirrel Campground

Concession

Pleasant View Picnic Area

Whip-Poor-Will Picnic Area

Shelter

Dumping Station

Parking

Shelter

Hickory Grove Picnic Area

Breezy Point Picnic Area

Parking

Whispering Pines Nature Trail

Parking

Parking

Dam

Lakeview Picnic Area

Parking

Embarras River

County Road No. 7

To Ill. Rt. 133-3 Mi.

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